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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9113

INFO RUEHZN/EST COLLECTIVE

RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 7774

RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 6517

RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 4794

RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 2952

RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 4109

RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS TOKYO 005069

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/J, OES/IHA AND S/GAC

DEPT PASS TO NIH/NIAID WESTERN

HHS FOR OGHA

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: TBIO SOCI KHIV AMED KSCA JA

SUBJECT: JAPANESE HIV VACCINE GOES TO CLINICAL TRIALS IN THE U.S.

1. Japanese scientific and other press report that a Japanese consortium plans to begin clinical trials of its AIDS vaccine in the U.S. as early as 2010. It would be the first clinical test of a Japanese-developed AIDS vaccine. The consortium includes the University of Tokyo, the National Institute of Infectious Diseases and biotech venture firm DNAVEC Corporation, originally created through a project supported by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare. Clinical trials will be conducted in cooperation with the New York-based International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI). If the initial tests show the vaccine's safety and efficacy, larger scale clinical trials will follow. If the later phase clinical trials are successful, the consortium would plan to commercialize the vaccine by 2015. According to DNAVEC officials, the company operates a small-scale vaccine production facility for experimental purposes; DNAVEC would expand the facility or contract with other firms to mass produce the vaccine. 2. The vaccine is based on the Sendai-virus vector technology developed by Tsukuba-based DNAVEC. The nasal-spray vaccine aims to increase the number of immune cells available to attack cells infected by HIV. In tests on monkeys, the vaccine was successful in preventing infection in 60 percent of subjects exposed to the virus. Various AIDS vaccines have been tested around the world, but only a few have been found to be effective in tests on primates. Unlike a conventional DNA vector, the Sendai-virus vector is an RNA virus vector that elicits mucosal immune responses necessary to provide protection against HIV with little risk of causing disease. University of Tokyo Professor, Dr. Tetsuo Matano, who has worked with DNAVEC to develop HIV vaccines using the Sendai vector, will be available to IAVI as an expert advisor during the clinical trials.

SCHIEFFER